

PRIVATE ARCHIVES AS A SOURCE OF THE HISTORY OF BOMBAY

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For the purpose of the project of writing the history of Bombay on which I have been engaged these last few years, a private archive may be defined as a repository of documents, resulting from the activities and transactions of individuals and institutions, and access to which is by grace and not by right as in the case of the public i.e., government archives. I have been taking an increasing interest in the acquisition and preservation of private archives ever since it occurred to me that it is worth trying one's mettle to recount the romantic history of the growth of Bombay from a settlement of rock, swamp and jungle to its present proud position of the commercial metropolis of India. For the part played by the government, the erstwhile colonial British rulers, there is ample material in the Bombay Archives. But for the part played by the people who contributed the lion's share to the development of the beloved city, this repository of the government was not so useful.

The idea of writing a comprehensive work actually dawned on me in February, 1965 when the tercentenary of the cession of Bombay came round on the 18th February of that year, and passed off without producing so much as a ripple in Bombay's intellectual circles. I myself was not prepared, although I was instrumental in introducing the study of the history of Bombay in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the M.A. degree in History. The utmost that I could do at the time was to convince my colleagues on the board of management of the Asiatic Society of Bombay of the desirability of dedicating the volume of the Society's journal of that year to the memory of one of Bombay's outstanding historians, Dr. Jose Gerson da Cunha, who had produced a classic on the history of the city, tracing the history of the island during the Hindu, Muslim, Portuguese and early British periods in his *Origin of Bombay*. And the Society had published this treatise as an "Extra Number" of its journal for the year 1900.

In my editorial to the combined volumes 39-40 for 1964-65, named the *Dr. Jose Gerson da Cunha Memorial Volume*, in which I assessed the contribution of the great scholar, I bemoaned the fact that his premature death prevented the successful fruition of his work on the history of Bombay. He could not bring out within the compass of a single volume the history of the great metropolis whose economic history alone, dealing as it should do with local history and trade, trade with the rest of India, overseas trade with Europe and Afro-Asian countries, would need several volumes for adequate treatment. And I added, "There are, besides, institutions which grew up in the course of its development such as the Port Trust, Municipal Corporation, Improvement Trust, Stock Exchange, Banks and other financial agencies, and subjects like education, sanitation, housing, transport, sports and recreation,—each of which will demand a volume

for itself. Then there are the various communities—the Parsis and the Banyas to whose bold enterprise the economic prosperity of Bombay is largely due, the Christians to whose educational institutions spread all over Bombay Western India is indebted for its educational pre-eminence, the Bhora, Memon and the Khoja Muslims to whose hard work Bombay owes much of its creature comforts, and then the local elements in the population—the Maratha and the Brahman, the Prabhu and the Kayastha, the Koli and the Bhandari—all of whom have served Bombay to the best of their ability, and the contribution of each of which communities will have to be evaluated”.

The idea being a call to action, I went through the state papers in the Bombay Archives which vouchsafed me a vision of the growth and development of the city in the course of three centuries. And I realized that, devoting a volume each to the well-marked stages in the city's development, the history of Bombay would run into ten volumes of 500 pages each, entailing a labour of 54,000 man-hours or thirty years, if I were to undertake the work alone and unaided. This was not practicable. I therefore devised a scheme under which the post-graduate students who were invited to join me in this enterprise would each take a volume as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree, and thus within a reasonable time we would be able to produce a readable as well as a thorough, accurate, objective, and critical account of the city without any cost of the tax-payer.

The problem that presented itself at the very outset was that of location and access to the private archives, it being axiomatic that there can be no history without documents: *pas des documents, pas de l'histoire*. The activities of the people and the way they lived their leisure could only be studied and assessed if traces have been left of these activities in the form of records. Bombay has been a beehive of business and industry from its early beginnings. The weaving industry, both in cotton and silk, was given an impetus from the earliest years of the British occupation of the island, and weavers from Thana, Chaul and Bhiwandi, all in the vicinity of Bombay but in the Portuguese territory, were enticed to make their home in Bombay. In 1669 there was a street with houses for the accommodation of these immigrants.¹ In course of time the city became a mighty conglomerate of factories, cotton mills, silk mills, woollen mills, hosieries, cotton presses and gins, flour mills, tenneries, saw mills, iron works, and foundries, paper mills, art manufacture, and printing presses and with the arrival of Lavji Nasarwanji Wadia, the master-carpenter, Bombay acquired the renown throughout the world for ship-building. But Bombay has been pre-eminently a trading centre with its citizens engaged in every conceivable trade, each branch thereof being in the hands of a particular community, with the exception of the Parsis who were ubiquitous in every branch. The Marwadis were mostly found as money-lenders and Gujarat Jains as bankers, commission agents and jewellers, those of Cutch as grain merchants, and Banyas as traders in every commodity. There were the Parsi, Khoja, Marwadi, Bhatia, Memon and Bohra capitalists engaged in export and import. Added to these were the European business firms. And there were banks, cooperative credit societies and insurance companies doing business in fire, life and marine insurance.²

Needless to say, any records of the varied business activity will furnish invaluable material for the study of economic history not only of Bombay

but of every part of India with which the city had any business dealings. There is also something in the air of this city which inspires an intense civic pride, and there is no industrialist worth the name but has willingly come forward to contribute to its welfare. It is said of Jamsetj Nusserwanji Tata for instance, the founder of the far-famed House of Tata, that a casual remark dropped within his hearing that Bombay had no good hotel actuated him to build the Taj Mahal Hotel on which he spent nearly Rs. 45 lakhs. This was an enterprise without any hope of commercial return. But he never regretted it because it was for the service of Bombay. And when he realized that the prosperity of his beloved city would be in jeopardy so long as it was entirely dependent on coal brought thirteen hundred miles by rail or sea from remote fields, he laid the foundations of the hydro-electric schemes which are making Bombay virtually independent of coal and furnishing it with an abundance of cheap, clean power. He firmly believed that no country could become industrially great which did not manufacture iron and steel, and no sustained economic growth was possible without provision for an excellent scientific education—a conviction which resulted in the foundation of the Iron and Steel Works at Jamshedpur and the opening of the Indian Institute of Bangalore which aims at giving post-graduate education in science second to none in the world.³

The documents in the custody of the business concerns are of immediate use for the firms themselves for writing their own history and the history of the business houses when completed will throw light on the economic history of the city during the period covered by these accounts. As well, the records could serve as material for the history of specific industries such as steel, textiles and ship-building. And thirdly, business archives may also elucidate the successive stages in the industrialization of the country. But important as these documents are, they also present difficult problems of the intending users, their very location being one of these. Where are each of these archives to be found? How much of its has survived? And what is its value for tracing the economic development of the city?

A glimpse of the kind of information to be expected from this source may be had from a letter which came in my view during a random sampling of the papers, ranging from 1826 to 1875, in the 44 bound and laminated volumes, a part of the archives of the business firm of Sir Jamshedjee Jejeebhoy, which is now housed on the Bombay University Library. Addressed to a firm in London, the letter is as follows:

Bombay 8th February 1864. Dear Sirs, I have been duly favoured with your letters of the 3rd and 18th December and 4th January and thank for the market advices contained in these which are always acceptable to me. I hope you will soon be able to tender me a satisfactory account sales of my shipment of indigo to you care.....city of Benares. The case of photographs to my address but intended for my brother Rustumjee referred to in your letter of 3rd December came safely to hand and has been made over to him. In your letter of 4th January you enclosed overland receipt for another similar case to my address which has also been received. As I did not order this supply of photographs, I shall be glad to know if these also are intended for my Brother Rustumjee? I have also to acknowledge receipt of your circular of 1st January announcing the

admission into your firm of M. C. Williams, formerly of the firm of Messrs Nemington and Co. whose signature I duly note. Hoping to reply to your late letters by this opportunity I remain dear Sir, Your most obedient servant Jamshedjee Jejeebhoy.

Closely connected with the business archives are the absolute records of the solicitors. My heart almost sank when I learnt that for want of space it is now a regular practice among the solicitors to discard the records periodically. The solicitors however do not mind making over the documents they want to dispose of to *bona fide* historians. A counterpart of these records are to be found in the Record Room of the Bombay High Court. These records throw a welcome light on the life of the people and their manners and customs in addition to information on laws and legal procedure of a bygone age. The insolvency files in particular are most illuminating, yielding as they do precious details for the economic history of the period with which they deal.

The history of judicial administration in Bombay falls into five well-marked period. The first Court of Judicature was established on 8th August 1670. It was replaced in 1726 or 1728 in actual fact by what is known as the Mayor's Court. The latter dispensed justice of a sort, and so to repair its obvious defects the Recorder's Court was instituted in 1798 with Sir James Mackintosh, one of the ablest judges we have ever had, as the Recorder. The Recorder's Court was supplanted in 1823 by the Supreme Court of Judicature which ran its course till 1862 when the Bombay High Court took its place. Seventy years ago when Phiroze B. M. Malabari started visiting the Record Room, the Law's Lumber Room as he calls it, intent on writing the legal history of Bombay, he found the records exposed to "dust, damp, and destruction by white ants, not to mention long neglect." They have now been transferred to the custody of the Bombay Archives. Mr. Malabari was able to complete only the first volume of his intended four volumes of legal history, *Bombay in the Making* (1910), a masterpiece of Indian historiography. The gleanings from a minute book (from 1726 to 1727) which he recovered from a heap of manuscripts and which he has included in the last chapter (chapter XII) make most interesting reading, dealing as they do with civil, criminal and miscellaneous matters.

Having written on Garcia da Orta the, celebrated author of the first book printed in India in 1561—*Colloquios dos Simples e Drogas da India*—a Portuguese physician who held Bombay in fee simple from the Portuguese Crown, I was naturally interested in the History of medicine. I went through the records relating to the Grant Medical College, kept in the Bombay archives, though I have yet to visit its own record rooms. There are, besides, medical institutions whose *raison d'etre* is the promotion of health and hospitals and nursing homes, nursing the sick back to health. Material is thus ample for a well-documented history of medicine.

Yet another source for the history of the city's health are the mortuary records. There are cemeteries and cremation grounds, a Tower of Silence and a crematorium. It is possible to produce a scientific work on the city's health from a close study of the records kept at these institutions. But the study will also expose certain weaknesses in the working of the municipal self-government in Bombay, the question leaping to mind, for instance: why should people be carried away in the city by preventable diseases like malaria, typhoid, small pox and tuberculosis, diseases which the West has succeeded in wiping out? Have effective measures been taken in the elementary but

essential matters like the draining of swamps, the construction of sewers, the collection of garbage, and the abatement, of the nuisances? Has careful watch been kept against watering and the persence of germs that may be found in raw milk? Has attempt been made to teach the urbanites the principles of personal hygiene and civic habits, warn them against dangers to health, and impress on them the need for proper medical care and consultation?

A visit to the old Padroado cemetary of St. Peter's at Haine's Road revealed to me on a cursory glance at the fourteen columns of its current *Death Register*, devoted to each entry, that it is possible for instance to put the long or short span of life of each inmate down to the vocation in life that he followed. There are precious details in the *Register* under age, sex, profession and cause of death which may help a scientific worker to come out with suggestions for healthful living. And comparative study of inter-communal mortuary records may be revealing higher mortality in a particular community lead to the investigation of factors responsible for the increased number of deaths in that community.

The tomb stones themselves contain a lot of history and are comparable to the hero stones (called *viragals* in Karnataka) which are an inestimable source of history of ancient and medieval India. A general who lost his life in the Movement of 1857 has a tablet commemorating him in St. George's church at Bannu in the remote North-West Fronties where he served: "In affectionate memory of Brigadier General John Nicholson C. B. once Deputy Commissioner of this District who at the siege of Delhi, led the storm, fell mortally wounded in the hour of victory and died 23 September 1857, aged 34; gifted in mind and body, he was brilliant in government as in arms; the snows of Ghuznee attest his youthful fortitude; the songs of the Punjab his many deeds; the peace of this Frontier his strong rule; the enemies of his country know how terrible he was in battle, and we his friends love to recall how gentle, generous and terrible he was".

More often the epitaphs provide a glimpse of the character of the inmate and side light on the society in which he lived. Such is the epitaph of John Henry Stephenson, A Bombay Solicitor who died at Bussorm on 21st February 1816, aged 37. The epitaph is in St. Thomas Cathedral Bombay :

Still let the tropyh'd urn and sculptured bust
Of shrouded grandeur, mock the slumbering dust
His sterling worth no borrowed aid requires
From bleething sculptures or poetic fires;
The social virtues of his generous mind
Live in each friend's memorial breast enshrined
And those, the law to his protection gave
Still bleses'd the hand that reached them but to have
Still bless'd the heart, just, liberal, candid, bold,
Unswayed by interest, prejudice or gold.
Asia admired—bewail'd his short career
And o'er his ashes shed the grateful tear.
No prouder monument can marole yield!
No brighter trophy blazon virtue's shield!

The name is legion of the institutions in Bombay affording facilities to its citizens to spend their leisure as best they choose. There are the race course, theatres, clubs and gymkhanas, places of worship—temples, mosques, churches, and synagogues—libraries, and even unspeakable things like the gambling dens, etc. There are communal organisation like the Parsi Panchayat, each aiming at promoting the welfare of its community. There are the literacy and artistic societies like the Asiatic Society of Bombay formerly known as the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the age-old premier cultural institution in Western India boasting of the rarest collection of books and manuscripts this side of Suez, the Bombay Natural History Society which is very active and the Bombay Art Society. The minute books of all these institutions, apart from the correspondence, are an important source illuminating the contribution of each to the life of the city. We have numerous educational institutions, schools and colleges and two universities. The archives of these institutions will throw light on the methods of teaching, the subject taught, the research if any, information about the members of the staff and the scholastic record of the alumni.

Then there are the hotels which provide recreational facilities like the Taj. Some time last year a person on the staff of the Taj, a journal published by the hotel, wanted me to suggest reading for an article on an entrancing subject: the role of the Taj in the social life of Bombay. I was told that the hotel itself had no records on the subject. And it immediately occurred to me that a start could be made with the "Bombayman's Diary", a most delightful record of the social life in Bombay in the columns of the *Evening News*, by the late Simon Justinian Pereira, a literary genius whose rendezvous was the Taj.

Files of newspapers together with the correspondence that has accrued in their offices over the years are therefore source which the historian should not despise but use with caution because error in newspaper reports is incidental to haste with which a newspaper has to be got out. But the editorials and the advertisements have each a value all its own. The former reflect public opinion in politics and other matters generally speaking, and the latter often furnish reliable data to the economic or social historian. They record for instance the current prices of the commodities or supply descriptive details of articles meant to meet the human needs and luxuries of the day.

Then again, there are the family papers, providing as they do mass of information for social and economic history. They may contain documents of individual member of the family who, having followed avocations of their own, may have brought with them papers relating to their offices, which papers may have passed inadvertently into the family collection. Add to this, a family of note is sure to have papers relating to litigation. A medical family is likely to possess case books and prescriptions and legal family valuable documents relating to legal matters belonging to its clientele. Above all, there may be diaries, memoirs and travel journals kept by individual members which may peradventure throw light on local as well as national history.

Last but not the least is the mass of material resulting from the activities of the trade unions and the political parties. The records relating to the former are useful to trace the relations between capital and labour.

Those relating to the latter show the development of national consciousness as a result of the operation of foreign rule and the criticism of that rule on the part of the political parties the Liberals, the Congress and the Muslim League.

All these parties, it is interesting to note, emerged from a predecessor now defunct,—the Bombay Presidency Association. Founded in 1855 to acquaint the British public of the Indian aspirations, it made numerous representations to the governing authorities on local, provincial and central matters. For years its trustees have had in their possession a precious holding of papers belonging to Dadabhai Naoroji and other giants there were in those days, but did not know what to do with it, as no one was coming forward to edit the papers, staggered as they were by its very size; until at least they prevailed on Prof. R. P. Patwardhan to undertake the work. And my revered professor indeed made history when after an arduous labour of fifteen years in deciphering 40,000 letters he gave to the world the cream of the Wacha-Dadabhai correspondence in two extremely well-edited volumes. Two further volumes will soon go to press. This is a monumental work of painstaking scholarship for which the highest praise is due to the incomparable editor.⁶

It would appear from this correspondence that, in the opinion of our leaders, the proconsuls that Britain sent out to India at the *fin de siècle* were not inspired by the same ideals as were the early proponents of British imperialism like Mountstuart Elphinstone. As these latter understood it, the task of the British in India should consist in training the indigenous people in the art of self-government, and accordingly, the proudest day in English history would be the day when with the fulfilment of this task they would consign the reins of government in Indian hands and quit the country. But the "Whither" of India, as Wacha puts it, had come too soon, outrunning British calculations that it would be a century before Indians would be ripe scholars and fully able to demand complete political enfranchisement.⁷ They were undeceived, and were not trying to retard political progress by crippling education. True, it is not possible to put the hands of the clock back. But the Englishmen are also practical, and their sterling common sense would compel them to view our affairs in the right perspective and light.⁸

For this expectation to be realized it took sixty years. When it did come true, Mahatma Gandhi was so overwhelmed by the historic decision of the British nation, as he put it, "voluntarily to break the empire and erect, in its place, an unseen and more glorious one of hearts" that he likened it to the renunciation of Asoka "who gave up all pomp and circumstances of power to become the undisputed emperor of the hearts of men."⁹ Mahatma Gandhi had fought British imperialism for twenty-five years, and in comparing the voluntary break up of the British empire to the renunciation of Asoka he wished to record his sense of highest admiration for the sacrifice the British nation had made. The correspondence discloses the correct lead Bombay gave to the country.

To arrive at an estimate of the maintenance of the private archives in the city, I sampled the record rooms of the Archdiocese of Bombay, dating from 1720, the Elphinstone College from 1835, and the University of Bombay from 1857. In each of these repositories the division of the

documents is in accordance with the sources that have produced and are producing these records. Thus in the Elphinstone College the sources contributing to the accumulation are (i) the Government, meaning the Education Department, (ii) the Directorate of Education, (iii) the other offices of Government such as Deputy Director of Education, Educational Inspector, the Zilla Parishads etc., (iv) the University, (v) the members of the public, (vi) guardians of students and the students themselves, (vii) other Educational institutions-Colleges, School etc. (viii) Applications for admission—a very important section, maintaining the students' progress. In the University the documents were divided into sixteen sections; (i) Property, meaning buildings, gardens, portraits, busts, furniture and fixtures etc., Compus, insurance of the University property etc. (ii) Administration: A. Registrar, B. Establishment, C. Finance and Account, D. Meetings, E. Stationery, F. Certificates G. General: annual reports, statistical notification, H. Suits against University, O. Ephemeral, X. Miscellaneous, (iii) Endowments, (iv) Library, (v) Departments, (vi) Post-graduate, (vii) Affiliated and recognized institutions, (viii) Courses of Study, (ix) Examinations, (x) Constitution: Government, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Rector, (xi) Authorities: Syndicate, Academic Council, Facilities, Board of Post-graduate Studies, (xii) Convocation, (xiii) Elections, (xiv) Extra activities, (xv) Other University Bodies, (xvi) Miscellaneous. In the Archdiocesan Archives the documents were divided into thirteen entities, among which the following were the more important: Parish Files, Properties, Religious—Men and women, meaning the members of the various religious orders working in the Archdiocese, Marriage cases, and lastly institutions, meaning sodalities, St. Luke's Medical Guild, Eucharistic Congress etc. The Archdiocesan Archives were spick and span, the best that I have so far visited.

The persons in charge of these repositories were doing a useful job but The custodian of the Archdiocesan Archives who probably had an inkling of the system under which business correspondence is filed has devised a system according to which the documents are divided into 26 classes, each with an alphabetical symbol. When a class comes to be subdivided, each subdivision receives a numerical figure. Retrieving of documents meets with no difficulty so long as the Archdiocesan curia sends the documents marked with the correct symbol. But sometimes a mistake in typing can result in shelving a document in wrong place as when for instance AH P 27 which is the place for "church parish" is typed as AH R 27 which is the symbol "Men Religious". Likewise a document may be wrongly "symbolized" as for instance "church extension" receiving the symbol of "catchchetics". This apart, the system is running smoothly. It is applied and wisely so, only to the current records, namely those which have accrued since the present custodian took charge of the Archives.

The persons in charge of these repositories were doing a useful job but had not had training in the keeping of archives. So before leaving each of the repositories, I made bold to tell them that they should adhere to the wellworn principles of archives keeping :

- (i) Always regard provenance as the guiding principle—the essential problem is the reason behind the presence of a document or bundle in the collection.

- (ii) Never disturb the arrangement of the collection more than is necessary for the purpose of listing.
- (iii) Whenever a bundle is broken for any reason, a "stay transferred or a map removed for safer storage, make a clear note of what has taken place.
- (iv) View the collection as a whole throughout the process and obtain the maximum background information before attempting to sort or classify.
- (v) So far as is consistent with the other suggestions, work with the known to the unknown.¹⁰ These are categorical imperatives binding on all archivists.

It is however to be feared that many documents in all these collections have been irretrievably damaged in the course of years. But a good number can perhaps still be rejuvenated by the application of modern scientific techniques. We are all familiar with the damage caused by white ants and the surface feeders, cockroaches, silver fish and psocids. It is not common knowledge that some insects which made their home among old documents are invisible to the naked eye, and can only be detected by the microscope. It is pleasant to note that many offices in Bombay have gone in for the services of pest control agencies, and it is hoped that damage from insects will be stayed before long. But it is not the living creatures alone that can destroy a manuscript. Direct rays of the sun have been found as injurious as inundation by water. In Bombay and Western India generally humidity is endemic, promoting the growth of mildew and various types of fungus, and the records need fumigation if they are to survive for a long period. There are present in the atmosphere acids and gases which are lethal to documents. And there is everywhere the baffling problem of want of space. What is worse, the documents are left to gather dust in the absence of arrangement to clear them, a requirement which should be made a matter of daily routine. Almost everywhere wooden shelves are used for shelving the documents, a practice which is an open invitation for pests to feed on the records. It is also to be feared that there is no provision anywhere for the study of the manuscript, heritage of city. And there is no effort to arrange, catalogue and index this heritage and no repair documents crying for help to heal the damage.

Under these circumstances, nothing short of establishment very soon by the Municipal Corporation or the Government of a city Record Office can save the situation. Such an archive was started in Jerusalem only recently, and the documents that are stacked on 600 yards of shelves are already beginning to tell the colourful story of Jerusalem as it is today. In an article in *News from Israel* (October 15, 1977) entitled "Jerusalem's historical secret", Karen Hoffmann says that life in the city under the Turks, the sprouting of Jewish neighbourhoods outside the Old City walls, thirty years of British rule, minutes of meetings of the City Council under Jordan when the city was divided from 1948—67 all this and much more can be found among the 25,000 photos, 18,000 negatives, 1,000 posters, maps and etchings and in the library of 2300 books. Nor is the building of the archives left to lucky chance. Menachem Levine, the Director, and his assistant comb the city systematically for the private

collections of the Jerusalem notables, neighbourhood committees, public institutions, industries and hosieries. And once they get on the tracks of a valuable find that they don't weary of long negotiations in order to secure the new material. "It is the seemingly trivial item that often proves to be invaluable in depicting life in Jerusalem's past," he writes. "Food and water coupons from Jerusalem under siege (1948) are rare finds, probably because no one thought to give up his day's rations for posterity's sake : Files of Lawyers' correspondence give evidence of educational institutions, yeshivot (Jewish traditional school), banks, building contractors, insurance companies that no longer exist. Like pieces of a puzzle, these bits of information fit together to give a more complete picture of the cultural and commercial history of the city." The archives serve a whole host of visitors—TV and film producers looking for documentary material, journalists, architects working on the urban planning and renewal of Jerusalem, and university students doing research. In addition to pictorial and printed evidences there is an oral history project. Under this project, recollections of historical events and life in Jerusalem are taped from the records of living eye witnesses.

To attract historical material to the proposed City Record Office, the archivist must follow the example of Dr. Menachem Levine and his assistant. He should visit the families and business houses known to possess archives of their own, and convince them of the importance and urgency of saving our manuscript heritage, drawing their attention to the historical value of the obsolete records. He should make a thorough study of the records as and when the manuscript wealth starts pouring into the Record Office, and hold periodical exhibitions of the material with a view to showing the contribution the City Record Office is already in a position to make to the historiography of Bombay. He should invite potential depositors to these exhibitions so that they may see for themselves how important a part the preservation of documents can play in the life of an industrial town or the country as a whole. He should also publish carefully worded appeals in the newspapers from time to time. And above all, he should endeavour to make his holdings readily accessible by compiling finding aids to the collections in the form of an inventory, followed by a catalogue, and meet specific need, if any, by the production of indexes and lists of record items. In the preparation of these aids, it is advisable that he fulfils the desiderata listed in any reputable manual of Archival Science such as T. R. Scheelenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1965).

But all this counsel will be like water off duck's back unless the powers that be realize that it is essential for the preservation of country's manuscript wealth that the record rooms from the Central Secretariat and the Ministries down to the lowest level, the talukas, and including the repositories of industries both in public and private sectors, schools and colleges, in fact of every activity that leaves its traces on documents, are placed in charge of trained personnel. It may be necessary for this purpose that in addition to the prestigious diploma course in Archival Science at the National Archives of India the state archives as well as the universities be required to institute a degree course, a diploma course, a short course or even a galloping course in the subject to suit the varying needs of the repositories of diverse size and importance. But whatever be the

duration of the course, it should impress on the trainee that the repository that he would be in charge of is the combination of records centre and treasure house for the history, as the case may be, of his taluk, district, state and the country, of his school and college, of the various industries as well as of the stages in the country's industrialization. He should know the records of his holdings as the palm of his hand; and he should gather as much informational material as he can, all of which will help him to complete the historical picture of his unit, provide for the varying approaches of prospective users of his repository, strike out new paths of original research, and supply the background information to the legislators when a piece of legislation is on the anvil at the level with which he is concerned to enable them to examine the legislative proposal in the light of past experience. There is nothing utopian in what I am suggesting. This is the order of the day abroad, and it has been achieved by our own great archivists. But is equally important that there should be a decided improvement in the status of the archivist and substantial scales of pay be offered to attract talent.

It is to be hoped that, with the country awakening to a sense of the supreme importance of the archives, the current—*archival*—year will prove to be a turning-point in the history of the archives. And the Records Rooms will not longer be lugubrious lumber rooms but centres of light and leading.

References :

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2. *Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island* (Bombay, 1910), vol. II, pp. 293—313.
3. Frank Harris, *Tata. Bombay, Blackie*, 1958), p. xii (Introduction by Sir Stanley Reed).
4. Theon Wilkinson, *Two Monsoons* (London, Duckworth, 1976) p. 44.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
6. *Dadabhai Naoroji Correspondence* (Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1977), vol. II, pts. I & II (655 letters covering 909 pp. Besides copious notes in small print 50 41 pp.). Correspondence with D. E. Wacha 4-11-1884 to 5-4-1917.
7. *Ibid.* pt. I, No. 30, p. 60 dated 13th July, 1888.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
9. Tendulkar, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. VIII, p. 168.
10. Lilian Redstone & Francis W. Steer (ed), *Local Records* (London Bell & Son, 1953), p. 78.

B. MINUTES OF THE SYMPOSIUM

In pursuance of our efforts to create archives consciousness in the country, a Symposium was held in the forenoon of 13th January, 1979 at the Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Aurangabad, with Dr. S. P. Sen in the Chair. The theme of the Symposium was 'Private Archives and their Problems'. In all, 8 papers were read on the occasion. Of these papers, 1-2 related to Problems of Private Papers in foreign countries, 3-4 to the general problems of Private Papers in India, 5 to problems of Private Papers in religious institution and the rest to problems of such papers in particular regions.

Historian	Subject
1. Dr. V.D. Divekar . . .	Availability of Private Archival Material relating to India in other countries.
2. Dr. Judith S. Hornabrook . . .	Some Notes on the Problems of Private Archives.
3. Sh. S.A.I. Tirmizi . . .	Private Archives in India—Identification of their Problems.
4. Dr. K. P. Srivastava . . .	Private Archives and their Problems.
5. Dr. G.S. Dikshit . . .	The Matha Archives and Their Problems.
6. Prof. G.M. Moraes . . .	Local Historical Sources for the History of Bombay.
7. Prof. G.H. Khare . . .	The Problems of Private Archives in Maharashtra
8. Prof. S.H. Jafri . . .	Private Archives and their Problems: Some reflections on the Records of Bhopal

2. Of these only two papers as at Sl. Nos. 1 and 2 above were circulated to the members in advance. In the absence of Dr. Dikshit his paper was read by Dr. V. T. Gune. The remaining papers were presented by their respective authors.

3. After all these papers were read, a general discussion on all the papers followed. Opening the discussion, Dr. Sen commended Prof. Moraes' Project in hand and added that this august body looked forward to the publication of the 'History of Bombay' proposed to be compiled in 10 volumes. Agreeing with the Chairman, Shri M. V. S. Prasada Rau added that number of records were available in Private custody in rural areas and something must be done to salvage them. Fully appreciating their importance, Shri Prasada Rau, at the same time, also emphasised the need to be more selective in acquiring these records in view of the limited storage space available in official repositories.

4. Intervening in the discussion Dr. A. L. Basham pointed out that private archives called for meticulous and timely care as their value might not be visible immediately today but might be known after passage of time. He further suggested that local historical societies should be entrusted with the task of taking care of local records in Private custody, as was done in

Australia, U.S.A. and certain countries of Europe. Such societies should involve Professors/Lecturers of History, and with the setting up of these Committees the Indian Historical Records Commission would have branches all over the country and these societies would form a valuable link between the local intelligentsia and the State Archives.

5. Commenting on Dr. Basham's suggestion, Dr. Amba Prasad observed that some positive steps had recently been taken in the direction by the Delhi Administration. Such Committees had already been set up with the help of school teachers and efforts were made to set up such committees all over the region. He suggested that National Archives of India and Local Archives offices should render technical advice to these bodies. He was of the view that a unit should be established at the National Archives of India to coordinate information regarding records in Private custody, and in this project, Corresponding Members of the Commission might also be associated so as to enable them to forward the relevant information to this unit. Intervening in the discussion Dr. Gune observed that fresh concentrated efforts should be made to arouse archival consciousness in the country by establishing small research centres all over the country, and the Directors of Archives should make suitable arrangements for wide publicity in this regard. Thereafter, Fr. Correa-Afonso observed that with a view to achieve the desired results, as done in U.K., National Archives of India should be more vigilant to take care of records put out on sale, and efforts should be made to persuade ex-rulers to hand over their private collections to various archives offices for proper and safe custody.

6. Shri J. K. Jain also shared the same views regarding the mass of valuable records with the Princely families, and reaffirmed his faith in persuading them and winning over their hearts by emphasising national importance of these records and reassuring them that these would never be so used as to prejudice their interests. Striking a different note Dr. H. K. Barpujari suggested that care should be taken not only of records in the custody of private individuals, but also of those relating to various major business firms e.g., Assam Tea Co., Jorhat Tea Co., and Assam Oil Co. He held that these papers were unique and vitally related to the socio-economic and cultural history of Assam. He pointed out that some of these houses had already taken away their records outside India and it should be for the National Archives of India to locate these papers through the help of India Office Library.

7. Dr. Dwijendra Tripathi observed that, records of the first textile mill established in Ahmedabad were being destroyed and in order to prevent such destruction suitable steps should be taken. He suggested that local Survey Committees should be expanded and reconstituted so as to have proper representation from the various local learned institutions and universities.

8. Apart from these general observations, Dr. Mohammad Yasin made certain specific observations on Dr. Srivastava's paper and pointed out that the author had failed to list out many other important sources in

private custody, found in the city of Lucknow e.g., records of the *Kutab-Khana* of Firanghi Mahal and those of various *Khangahs*. He, however, was of the view that some definite, well-articulated programme need be chalked out in this direction rather than merely going on listing the innumerable difficulties in the way.

9. Shri Y. K. Raikar pointed out that valuable records were available in the Buddhist Monasteries in Arunachal Pradesh, while Shri A. H. Choudhury and Shri C. P. Mathur were of the opinion that the problems of Private Archives could be solved only by creating archives consciousness in the public.

10. Summing up the debate, Dr. Sen observed that this august body should accept some of the challenges thrown up by some of the speakers, and requested Shri Tirmizi to explain the overall position in this regard. Appreciating the encouraging response from the members, Shri Tirmizi pointed out that the theme was selected in order to identify the problems of Private Archives and to suggest practicable solutions. He observed that this purpose had been served to a large extent. He expressed the view that the problems of Private Archives could be solved only if Historians and Archivists joined hands in salvaging the archival heritage in private custody. He pointed out that the University Grants Commission's scheme regarding creation of Archival Cells in different parts of the country would certainly go a long way in finding suitable solutions.

The Symposium ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.